

Application No. 10/540,265
Response to Office Action dated October 9, 2007

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 8 and 17 have been amended to require a first step of continuously feeding a material mixture comprising a vinyl-based monomer and a solvent selected from the group consisting of aromatic hydrocarbons, ketones, esters, alcohols, and mixtures thereof. Support for these amendments exists throughout the present application, including pages 10 and 11.

Claims 1-20 are currently pending.

The Office Action rejected the pending claims as anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as anticipated by EP 552,876 (“Holy”). In view of the following comments, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Holy relates to “high temperature aqueous processes for polymerization.” (See, abstract). Accordingly, Holy requires the presence of water in the reaction mixture. (See, paragraph bridging pages 3-4). That is, water is an essential component of Holy’s reaction mixture.

In stark contrast, the present invention requires the presence of an organic solvent selected from the group consisting of aromatic hydrocarbons, ketones, esters, alcohols, and mixtures thereof. Thus, an organic solvent, not water, is an essential component of the present invention. Whereas Holy requires the presence of water, the present invention requires the presence of an organic solvent.

For at least this reason, Holy cannot teach or suggest the present invention.

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Moreover, this difference in solvents is significant. Unlike Holy's use of aqueous solvent, the organic solvents of the present invention enable the viscosity during polymerization to decrease and the molecular weight of the vinyl-based polymer to be lowered by chain transfer to the solvent --- thus, the viscosity of the obtained product comprising the vinyl-based polymer can be decreased. (See, page 10, line 24 through page 11, line 3 of the present application). Furthermore, when the product's viscosity is thus decreased, various benefits such as (1) uniform application of a coating material is facilitated; (2) optimum coating area is widened; (3) coating speed is increased; and (4) clogging of the coating nozzle is decreased, can be realized. Because Holy relates to using an aqueous solvent, Holy cannot teach, suggest or recognize any such benefits which are associated with the claimed invention.

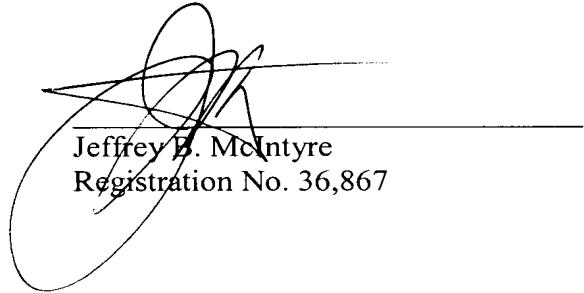
For all of the above reasons, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

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Applicants believe that the present application is in condition for allowance. Prompt and favorable consideration is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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